

VZCZCXRO0753
PP RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHKU #0526 1010555
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 110555Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8753
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0838
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 1781
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 1041
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1386
RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHKU/OMC-K KUWAIT KU

UNCLAS KUWAIT 000526

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

STATE FOR AIAG, NEA/ARP, NEA/RA; CAIRO FOR LINDA LOGAN
AMMAN FOR WHITTLESEY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KSCA](#) [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: KUWAIT AVIAN FLU UPDATE #8

Ref: Kuwait 513 and previous

11. (SBU) The total number of reported cases remains at 101, and no new cases have been discovered in the past week. Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) inspectors continue to take samples from commercial and private poultry holdings, and the culling of birds from facilities previously-identified as infected continues. Reports indicate that there are 65 inspection and culling teams, composed of more than 600 personnel (400 from the PAAAFR and 200 temporary workers) working in the Wafra area of southern Kuwait where the outbreak has been concentrated. These teams have been supplied with protective clothing and are primarily using Vercon-S to disinfect poultry facilities.

12. (SBU) On April 10, Econoff met with PAAAFR Deputy Director of Animal Health Dr. Muhammad Al-Muhanna, who leads the team responsible for the PAAAFRQs avian influenza (AI) eradication efforts. Al-Muhanna confirmed that there have been no new positive tests in nearly a week, and stated that the worst of the outbreak is likely over. He said he was pleased with the support the PAAAFR has received from the GOK, and that his requests for additional financial and personnel resources had all been granted. He did say, however, that the PAAAFR could use a full-time animal health infectious disease expert on its staff to assist with planning for future outbreaks. Al-Muhanna said representatives from the OIE and an Egyptian animal health expert had flown to Kuwait to provide expertise during the initial stages of the outbreak, but have since left.

13. (SBU) Al-Muhanna said he has received good cooperation from commercial poultry farms, and that this cooperation has been essential to the successful testing and culling operations in recent weeks. He said this cooperation can be attributed to owners' awareness of the dangers of AI, but also to promises of compensation from the GOK. Private poultry breeders, those with small backyard holdings, have sometimes been more problematic, he said. Private breeders have occasionally refused to allow the PAAAFR inspectors to take samples, but Al-Muhanna claimed that the PAAAFRQs persistence almost always convinces them to allow the inspectors in. (See Reftel for a contradictory account of Al-Muhanna's claim that the PAAAFR has succeeded in inspecting private holdings.)

12. (SBU) Comment: Al-Muhanna's demeanor during the

conversation clearly indicated his confidence that the worst of the outbreak is over, although he was adamant that his inspectors have not relaxed their efforts. He stated that the outbreak, and the lessons learned from PAAAFRQs response to it, had been Qa good learning experienceQ for his inspectors and that in the long-term, Kuwait Qwill benefit from the crisis.Q In general, PAAAFR appears to have thus far adequately responded to and controlled an outbreak in commercial poultry farms that was larger than anticipated.

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